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SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATES UNAMA/AFGHANISTAN

¶11. (U) Summary: On June 30, the Security Council held a quarterly debate on UNAMA/Afghanistan. SRSG Kai Eide briefed on behalf of UNAMA, Ambassador Zahir Tanin briefed for Afghanistan. In addition to interventions by Council members, eleven other countries (ISAF members and Afghanistan's neighbors) spoke. Common themes were 1) support for Afghanistan's upcoming elections; 2) concern regarding the security situation; and 3) support for UNAMA's mission and mandate. A plurality of countries clearly supported UNAMA's request for additional resources in 2010. Many countries also called on UNAMA to present benchmarks, as requested by UNSCR 1868, and expressed concern regarding civilian casualties. Several, including SRSG Eide, welcomed General McChrystal's recent comments on addressing the issue of civilian casualties. End summary.

INTERVENTIONS BY UNAMA AND AFGHANISTAN

¶12. (U) In his statement, SRSG Kai Eide touched on a number of issues. He began by summarizing UNAMA's election support activities. Overall, UNAMA's goal is to "ensure an election process that is credible and where the result can be accepted by the people." Eide urged all candidates to campaign with dignity and fairness, called on all Government institutions and officials to maintain impartiality, and called on the international community to avoid any interference or appearance of interference in the election process. Key elements of the level playing field are "non-interference, a dignified policy-oriented debate and total international impartiality," said Eide.

¶13. (U) Eide noted "totally new momentum" in strengthening security institutions, reforming agriculture and the private sector, improving revenue collection and the government's internal coordination and developing comprehensive civilian capacity-building programs. He said this momentum was the result of competent Afghan ministries, although he singled out the U.S. review of development policies as crucial to this momentum. Eide welcomed U.S. readiness to support "Afghan plans and Afghan priorities more generously than before." The SRSG then turned to the issue of civilian casualties, and supported the Secretary-General's call (as noted in the recent UNAMA quarterly report) to review the use of air power in populated areas, to review the operations of special forces, and to better prepare international military forces for the Afghan political and cultural context. "It is my view that the political costs of recent mistakes are simply disproportionate to military gains and that such reviews are urgently required," said Eide. He welcomed General McChrystal's "important statement" on the need for a fundamental shift in attitude regarding civilian casualties.

¶14. (U) In closing remarks, Eide emphasized the need for a perspective "that goes beyond the elections." He said the UN was prepared to be a partner in a Afghan-owned and led peace process, and noted the importance of regional security cooperation and trade, which would require a serious investment in Afghanistan's infrastructure (especially a railway network and an expansion of electricity lines). Eide noted the many rising expectations and new opportunities for

UNAMA, and pressed for more resources "to fulfill our mandate in donor coordination, to meet the new opportunities in capacity and institution building, and to expand across the country."

¶5. (U) Afghan PR Tanin took the floor next, and reinforced Eide's focus on elections. Like Eide, he also welcomed the U.S. and NATO strategic reviews. Tanin repeated a similar theme from his last intervention: namely, that Afghanistan has improved dramatically in the last eight years, and that this progress is ongoing. Despite the many improvements, however, Tanin noted that insecurity and fragmented development efforts checked Afghanistan's progress. He welcomed UNAMA's strengthened mandate and its "essential coordination role." Tanin ended with a reference to the region surrounding Afghanistan. He said "our enemies are not local, but regional, and find sanctuary and support outside Afghanistan." In an intervention later in the day, Pakistan's deputy PR said the exact opposite: "The insecurity challenges faced by Afghanistan are of internal origin."

SECURITY COUNCIL INTERVENTIONS

¶6. (U) Statements by Council members shared common themes: 1) support for Afghanistan's upcoming elections; 2) concern regarding the security situation; and 3) support for UNAMA's mission and mandate. Ambassador Rice emphasized the importance of the upcoming elections, welcomed UNAMA's leadership in donor coordination, called for increased resources for UNAMA, and addressed the issue of civilian casualties - she recalled General McChrystal's announcement

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that reducing civilian casualties would be a top priority. The UK, Austria and Mexico cited General McChrystal's remarks on civilian casualties as particularly helpful. Russia recognized ISAF efforts to minimize civilian casualties, but concluded that they have not been sufficient.

The Russian deputy PR said "special terrorist operations" should be Afghanized, and called for "meticulous investigations" in situations where civilian casualties may have occurred. He also stressed that Afghan national reconciliation dialogues should not violate Security Council sanctions on the Taliban, and that if the GOA wants to have a dialogue with "moderate" Taliban members, it should only be with those who have agreed to lay down arms and relinquish ties to al-Qaeda. Libya was most critical of civilian casualties, in keeping with its previous statements.

The acting Libyan PR called the withdrawal of foreign troops the "sina qua non of national reconciliation" and said the recurrent incidents of civilian casualties were deeply disconcerting; they forced Libya to question the rules and arrangements of ISAF's presence in Afghanistan.

¶7. (U) Japan, Uganda, Croatia and the U.S. clearly supported an increase in resources for UNAMA. France said it approached the issue in an "open spirit." Other countries, including the UK, Turkey, Costa Rica and Austria, focused instead on the need for UNAMA to prepare benchmarks on fulfillment of elements of its mandate. Eide noted that UNAMA was working on benchmarks and would present them to the Council in the next quarterly session.

INTERVENTIONS BY ISAF MEMBERS AND THE REGION

¶8. (U) In addition to Council members, New Zealand, Iran, Germany, Pakistan, the Netherlands, Norway, Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, India, and Italy addressed the Council. Canada's Foreign Minister addressed the Council, and touched on Canada's priorities: the elections, rule of law and capacity building within the Afghanistan security forces. He also noted Canada's interest in UNAMA's benchmarks and discussed his country's focus on border management issues. Germany and the Czech Republic echoed calls for UNAMA to work on benchmarks, while Norway, India

and Italy supported UNAMA's requests for more funding. Iran and Pakistan noted that large numbers of Afghan refugees still remained in their countries, and this placed a great burden on their respective countries. Iran also noted "the Afghans have made it clear that they will not accept the indefinite presence of foreign forces in their country." India exhorted members to "more vocally recognize and support growing Afghan capabilities" and criticized the UN's description of Taliban and al-Qaida attacks as organized by "anti-government elements" or "insurgents" instead of calling them terrorism attacks.

RICE